

Status Report- Summer 2000

Thanks to all the volunteers that are making this project a success!

MANCHESTER'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

Background

As part of an innovative agreement reached in March 1999 to reduce sewer overflows into the Merrimack and Piscataquog rivers, the city will undertake \$52.4 million in projects to eliminate the majority of sewer overflows. The city will also undertake \$5.6 million in supplemental environmental projects to benefit the city's environment. This includes \$2 million for land preservation; \$1 million to restore urban ponds; \$1 million to stabilize streambanks, \$1 million to reduce stormwater pollution; \$500,000 to reduce health threats to children; and \$100,000 for environmental education. This status report updates the activities of these supplemental environmental projects.

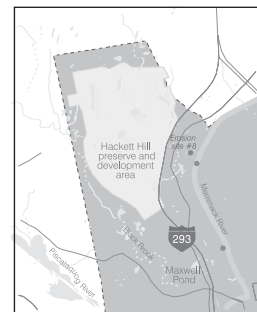
Stormwater Management

The City has selected Malcolm Pirnie to serve as the consultant on this part of the project. They are currently putting together a work plan to define tasks to assess the city's current stormwater collection system. They will be examining the standard operating procedures, ordinances and regulations, design and construction standards and inspection and enforcement. An additional component will be public education. This past spring Eighth grade students from Hillside Junior High School helped with this in stenciling a message on the streets at 150 storm drains. The message was "iThink Green, Keep Water Clean."

This past spring Hillside Junior High School stenciled 150 storm drains.

Land Preservation- Hackett Hill

The City has acquired 376 acres of globally rare habitat that will be put into a preserve to be managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Krista Helmboldt has been appointed by TNC to be the Preserve Steward, she is currently working on a stewardship and management plan for the preserve. The Preserve boundaries will be surveyed this summer, the boundaries shown on the map are approximate.



Groundwater monitoring wells were installed this past winter and have been sampled every 2 weeks to establish baseline hydrologic data.

The City's Planning Department has been working with the consulting firm of VHB to prepare a Master Plan for the developable portion of the Hackett Hill Property. A draft of this plan will be presented to the Mayor and Board of Alderman on Sept. 5th at 7:30.

The City is currently in negotiation with adjacent properties for the potential purchase of 283 acres to increase the amount of protected land around the Preserve.

Streambank Stabilization

On July 6th and 8th teams of volunteers were out on the Merrimack River either, walking along it or canoeing it to inventory the condition of the streambank and to look for problems or opportunities for cleanup or restoration. The 11 miles of River that go through the city were divided into 15 separate reaches or sections for the purpose of the inventory. A training for 20 volunteers was held on June 28th at the Amoskeag Fishway by the Hillsborough County Conservation District. Helen Castles and Katie Hughes lead the training and used slides of the river to help volunteers know what to look for and how to fill out the inventory forms. Katie is now compiling the information that was collected and with the help of David Bouchain of the Manchester Planning Department the information will be put on to maps and be used to prioritize restoration efforts. Katie's summary report will be ready this fall.

A clean up was held at Nutts Pond on June 17th. Area businesses donated supplies and volunteers. They retrieved shopping carts, tires and twenty large bags of litter from the Pond. Further clean ups are planned.



Environmental Education

A group of eighth grade teachers have been meeting over the past year as part of a Teacher Advisory Committee to develop a curriculum which will teach eighth graders about Manchester's environment through all subjects- science, math, English and social studies.

Real life problems such as calculating how much water a household uses, and where the water goes when the toilet gets flushed, will help kids get to know their own environment. Students helped with the storm drain stenciling and may eventually adopt some of the ponds. The Amoskeag Fishway and the Merrimack River Watershed Council are leading this effort.

Urban Pond Restoration

On March 1st a community meeting was held at UNH in the Millyard to discuss the Urban Pond Restoration Program and to recruit volunteers for the effort. It worked. This spring and summer volunteers have been out collecting data at each of the seven ponds currently being studied as part of this effort. These ponds include: Dorrs Pond, Crystal Lake, Nutts Pond, Pine Island Pond, McQueston Pond, Stevens Pond, and Maxwell Pond. Art Grindle, Urban Pond Coordinator, hired as a staff person to the Manchester Conservation Commission, has been leading the troops. He has also arranged an agreement with the Manchester Wastewater Treatment Plant to use their motor boat when needed.

Two new Pond Preservation societies have also been formed one for Maxwell Pond and one for Pine Island Pond. These two join the existing two - Dorrs Pond and Crystal Lake. The goal would be have a group willing to work on behalf of each pond.



Health Risk Reduction for Children

Dr. Rosemary Caron, Toxicologist has been hired by the Manchester Health Department to lead programs to reduce the incidence of asthma and lead poisoning in the city. She has arranged to have air toxics monitors placed in the city and she is working with school nurses to collect data on the incidence of asthma and student health. She has also applied for several grants to assist in the effort. The Health Department has also issued a request for proposals for projects to help with this effort. Proposals are due August 18.



Project Contacts

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| Land Preservation | Krista Helmboldt (603) 224-5853 |
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| Urban Ponds | Art Grindle (603) 624-6450 |
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Related News

The Day the River Turned RED

On June 9th a safe fluorescent red dye was injected into the river at the Amoskeag Dam to simulate a chemical spill and track its movement and dispersal rate. This is important information since downstream Nashua, NH uses the Merrimack River as a drinking water supply. The test was a coordinated effort of USGS, EPA and NH DES. It will be repeated in late summer/early fall when flows are the lowest.

Video: The Spirit of the Cohas

The Bethany Congregational Church has produced a video describing the history of the Cohas Brook area. It was debuted in April to a crowd of 200. Cohas Brook feeds Pine Island Pond and is the largest wetland area in the city. Contact Rev. Vera Wingate at (603) 880-7407

Planning Board Learns about Nonpoint Pollution

On June 22nd John Harwood of the So. NH Planning Commission gave a presentation to the Planning Board describing the pollution that comes from rainwater runoff and things they can do to help alleviate its impact on the City.